HYPE SOURCE: G FUEL'S CONTEMPORARY GAMER PERSONA AND ITS NAVIGATION OF PRESTIGE AND DIVERSITY

SIAN TOMKINSON THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND
JORDANA ELLIOTT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

ABSTRACT

G Fuel, an energy drink marketed towards gamers, performs a 'contemporary' gamer persona to interact with its audience, drawing upon an array of gaming influencers to appeal to fans of these figures. Specifically, this contemporary gamer persona builds upon the 'geeky' male gamer identity that has been constructed by marketers and adopted by players, utilising elements of esport such as skilfulness and focus. However, this persona also reimagines the gamer identity in alternative ways, such as gaming as an athletic activity – one that requires much mental and physical energy—and as an activity that connects players to others, and is exciting and glamourous, evocative of the lifestyles of gaming influencers. Thus, the contemporary gamer persona signals that there has been a shift in the popular discourses surrounding the 'gamer' identity in specific gaming micro-publics. The energy drink company G-Fuel is aware of this shift and strengthens this persona by forming partnerships with gamer microcelebrities and influencers. In this article, we find that in G Fuel's construction and maintenance of the contemporary gamer persona, they seek to appeal to the wider gaming audience, but must constantly negotiate a balance between popular but controversial influencers and a commitment to diversity.

KEY WORDS

G Fuel; Persona; Gamer; Video Games; Esports; Influencer

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

G Fuel is an energy and hydration drink brand, first released by New-York based company Gamma Labs in 2012. G Fuel products are available in a powder, liquid, and "energy crystals" (candies also known as 'pop rocks'). While other energy drinks have been marketed towards gamers, such as Monster and Red Bull, G Fuel is a prominent case for two main reasons. First, it has trademarked the slogan "the official energy drink of esports", suggesting that Gamma Labs sees itself as a leading brand in the industry. Second, G Fuel has established partnerships with sixty influencers, gamers, and athletes, and others, dubbed 'Team Gamma'. The most notable member, PewDiePie, is (to date) the most popular gaming influencer of all time, having broken numerous subscriber and views records on YouTube. In these respects, G Fuel is successful in

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

no small part due to how Gamma Labs constructs its persona in relation to some of the most significant gaming figures.

The 'gamer' is one of the most controversial and pervasive public identities in internet culture, and there has been a considerable amount of scholarly investigation into what constitutes the identity and how players perform and challenge it. In short, the 'gamer' label is one associated with certain cultural and social capital (so-called 'hardcore' styles of play which are often competitive, challenging, and violent), aggressive behaviour, investment of significant time and money, as well as being young, heterosexual, White, and male (Shaw 2012; De Grove, Courtois & Van Looy 2015). There has been much scholarly work exploring on the gendering of the gamer identity and ill-treatment of women (Paaßen, Morgenroth & Stratemeyer 2017; Dewinter & Kocurek 2017). It is also important to note that, as well as being produced through representational media industries, the gamer identity is, in part, produced through and circulated within the game industry in terms of the kinds of games developed and worker's attitudes and behaviours regarding the legitimacy of certain genres and styles of play (Kerr 2019; Dymek 2012, p.51; Johnson 2013). In the context of this paper, we are interested in what aspects of the gamer identity that G Fuel recognises as aspirational for their intended audiences and thus draws from in creating its persona.

Video gaming is no longer seen just as an obscure, violent hobby played by antisocial basement-dwelling teenage boys, and the traditional 'hardcore' gamer stereotype does not represent the majority of players because, as noted during the events of Gamergate in 2014[1], such "Gamers are dead" (Alexander 2014). Game communities are experiencing significant change, and Gamergater's outpouring of vitriol towards women occurred in no small part due to certain gamers feeling that their collective identity, community, and culture was under threat, and their interests were becoming less relevant. Such feelings led to the Gamergate's outpouring of vitriol and overt sense of entitlement, and can be traced back to the historic persecution of video games and players as unhealthy and antisocial, and geeks as bullied outsiders (King & Borland 2003, p.174). Indeed, in the US, UK, and Australia, women comprise around half of all players, and the average age of gamers is increasing (ESA 2020; Brand et al. 2020; Borowiecki & Bakhshi 2017). Further, the availability of indie tools has made game development more accessible resulting in a greater variety of games created by a more diverse range of developers[2]. While such negative characterisations of geeks or gamers still exist (and still significantly impact the industry and players), the gamer identity is in flux.

The gamer identity is also transforming with the rise of social media and streaming. As Taylor describes, the development of streaming service Twitch has led to two significant shifts. First, esports is now not only a sports product but also a media entertainment outlet (2018, p.4). Second, players can now "transform their private play into entertainment" (Taylor 2018). Esports and streaming share many traits that have ramifications for the gamer identity as publicly performed. Both are characterised by a culture where hard work, networking, and self-marketing are thought to lead to fame and success, and while many aspire to this, in reality only a few can realise such ambitions (Johnson, Carrigan & Brock 2019). Despite the belief that such spaces are equalisers and meritocracies, most esports players and enthusiasts are men aged 21-35 (Newzoo 2014, p.5), and most Twitch users are men aged 18-34 (Twitch 2018). In esports younger players are favoured due to physical deterioration, while in streaming women are pressured to appeal to the majority-male audience by presenting an attractive and sexualised appearance (and are often subsequently denigrated for this) (Zolides 2015, pp.42–43). In both industries, women face discrimination (Darvin, Vooris & Mahoney 2020, p.43; Ruberg, Cullen & Brewster 2019) and a lack of monetary compensation compared to their male counterparts (Kaser 2018; Ricchiuto 2018). Esports and streaming are highly competitive industries where

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

the aspiring celebrity is constantly working to produce a persona that will help them attain fame and success.

The esport industry's growth has been accompanied by a proliferation of performance-enhancing vitamins and energy drinks specifically targeted towards 'gamers', such as G Fuel. While little research has been conducted on consumer products aimed towards gamers, there is a growing interest in the advertising of consumer products such as energy drinks on digital platforms such as Twitch. Lopez Frias (2020), for instance, explores the ethics of energy drink promotion through digital platforms, and Pollack et al. (2020) found that energy and caffeinated drinks were the most common food and beverage advertisements on streamer profiles and titles. They state that "[e]nergy drink marketing was largely driven by mentions of G Fuel" (p.7), indicating that G Fuel is currently a prevalent brand on Twitch.

We believe that persona studies provides an insightful lens to explore the gamer identity as publicly performed through gamer influencers and G Fuel. Persona studies examines "how the individual moves into…social spaces and presents the self" (Marshall & Barbour 2015, p.8). It focuses on "how the individual 'publicises', 'presents' and strategically 'enacts' their persona" (2015, p.290). However, not all work in persona studies focuses on individuals. Fairchild (2019) examines how museums construct stardom as a process generated between artists and audiences. Further, Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) note that an essential component to product branding is persona-focused storytelling, through which the persona becomes a recognisable, memorable, relatable, and consistent emotional connection with the audience. Such brand personas try to emulate human traits and draw from archetypes to do so. Gamma Labs' use of influencers allows the G Fuel brand to seemingly possess human traits and be embodied through actual humans, aiding their brand's recognisability and relatability.

Where G Fuel is particularity interesting is in Gamma Labs' use of various brand ambassadors, including Twitch streamers, professional esports players, and YouTube celebrities. While these influencers share traits and perform common elements of the gamer identity, they also vary, drawing from their specific audiences in their individual persona construction. Energy drinks such as G Fuel are of interest because of their alignments and tensions with the traditional gamer stereotype: on the one hand they affirm that players are dedicated to intense, high-performance games, but such products are typically associated with more physical sports and activities. We are therefore interested in how such companies produce a persona that players connect with and aspire to when consuming their products. This persona could signal a resurgence of the 'gamer' identity with new connotations – we refer to this public identity from herein as the contemporary gamer persona. To explore this persona, we first provide a brief overview of G Fuel's persona construction on its website. Second, we outline how G Fuel uses social media platforms to perform this gamer persona. Third, we consider G Fuel's use of influencers in two dimensions: prestige and diversity. We find that G Fuel works to appeal to the broader gaming audience in its persona construction and performance but must constantly negotiate a balance between controversial influencers and a commitment to (or at least the perception of) diversity.

G Fuel's Website

Our first entry point into G Fuel's persona is its official website. Unlike G Fuel's social media presence which focuses on promoting flavours, sponsored influencers, and competitive tournaments, the website has a strong focus on health. On the website's FAQ and accompanying *What is G Fuel?* video, G Fuel is advertised as "natural", "clean and healthy", and "sugar-free, gluten-free, and packed with tons of antioxidants and b-vitamins". In comparison, G Fuel claims

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

that other energy drinks such as Red Bull have "unknown chemicals" and are "sugar-loaded" with a risk of side effects (G Fuel 2017a; Gamma Labs 2020a). Using the discourses of health and applying these discourses to the construction of G Fuel's brand and image makes sense considering that energy drinks have somewhat of a stigma for containing caffeine and taurine, as well as being associated with various physical and mental health problems (Seifert et al. 2011; Richards & Smith 2016). There have been concerns about these ingredients and their effects on children and adolescents, who comprise a large audience to the influencers advertising G Fuel (Zwibel et al. 2019; Stout 2015). To counter these concerns, G Fuel's website frames the product in opposition to other energy drinks, performing a "search for novelty or innovation" persona (Marshall, Moore & Barbour 2020, p.65).

A second notable pattern of representation on G Fuel's website is the depiction and targeting of people with "active and hectic lifestyles" (Gamma Labs 2020a), a descriptor used to refer to traditional athletes, as well as non-traditional athletes such as esports players. Video gaming is still a key feature on the website. The Our Story page explains that G Fuel was invented by a group of "guys" after they suffered an energy drink crash while "playing CoD, eating pizza, listening to T-Pain…You know…Gaming and grinding!" (Gamma Labs 2020b). Further, the FAQ claims that Gamma Labs' first customer was a "professional eSports athlete who wanted an immediate increase in Energy, Focus, and Endurance". Yet there is a clear attempt to broaden G Fuel's market to more conventionally energetic lifestyles, with "UFC fighters, eSports athletes, bodybuilders, skateboarders, YouTube stars, fitness models, and even NFL players" listed as key consumers. The introductory video *What is G Fuel* further diversifies the consumer audience, depicting both ordinary and fitness-oriented people with no specific connection to gaming (G Fuel 2017a). Another video, *What is G FUEL energy?*, features upbeat music and represents numerous young consumers, showcasing various ethnicities (G Fuel 2017b). These consumers include a woman in business attire and sneakers, two men gaming together with a woman spectating, a man playing a video game wearing a headset, a female boxer, and a male breakdancer. G Fuel's website mostly addresses a broad public, one that may play games or be interested in esports, but also in fitness and health in general. However, as will become evident throughout the paper, G Fuel's other branding strategies (the use of social media and influencers) target a general gaming audience – one that aspires to the 'contemporary' gamer persona. This contradiction suggests that G Fuel is targeting two kinds of audiences: first, broadly anyone who would consume an energy drink, game player or not, and second, gamers specifically. The core demographic appears to be gamers, and as will be discussed, this is who the bulk of their advertising targets, but everybody is invited to purchase the product.

Social Media Platforms and Influencers

Social media platforms are key to G Fuel's branding strategy, allowing Gamma Labs to capitalise on the transformation of the gamer persona from geeky, violent, and antisocial to aspirational, performative, and trendy. G Fuel utilises Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and Tik Tok, and advertises through various influencers on their social media accounts. To discuss how G Fuel attempts to influence, reconfigure, and utilise this contemporary gamer persona, we employ the collective and mediatised dimensions of persona. By collective, we refer to the way online personas "produce some collective or public activity", typically connections and networks made on social media (Marshall, Moore & Barbour 2020, p.71). By mediatised, we refer to how G Fuel uses various media technologies to produce its brand persona, noting that digital platforms are regulated, perceived as a commercial asset, and utilise elements of popular culture. As a result, the mediatised persona "is constantly undergoing transformation, revision,

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

remediation, and recirculation" on various platforms (2020, p.69). In this sense, the brand is not just one node in a network, but "part of an evolving and changing arrangement of multiple overlapping organizations, communities, and micro-publics" (2020, p.171). G Fuel not only harnesses its respective networks, connections, and 'micro-publics' as part of their branding agenda but also seeks to permeate those of microcelebrity content creators. As the brand actively appeals to gamers, an audience that is entrenched in popular culture, Gamma Labs must constantly tweak G Fuel's presence to engage with the zeitgeist.

The G Fuel persona is performed through various 'microcelebrity' figures (Senft 2008). Microcelebrity can be defined as the strategic cultivation of celebrity online through various production, distribution, and social practices (and performance) focused on fostering popularity with specific audiences, and is intertwined with self-branding, the commoditisation of the self (Senft 2008; Marwick 2013; Khamis, Ang & Welling 2017; Usher 2020). Many microcelebrities can be described as 'influencers', emphasising the use of influence to achieve commercial agendas and establish strong social engagement with followers (Abidin 2015). Many of G Fuel's microcelebrities are gaming influencers. In the online gaming sphere, influencers are not necessarily expected to share their personal lives with followers to the same extent that a 'lifestyle' blogger or social media influencer is, as their value instead derives from their perceived skill, displayed consumer products, and 'gaming capital'– a demonstrated knowledge of games (Consalvo 2007). One way that gamer influencers strengthen their authenticity with audiences is by utilising nicknames that double as gamertags, a practice which "is important beyond self-expression, as it becomes intrinsically tied to the gamer and part of a much larger branding practice" (Zolides 2015, p. 48). This persona also seemingly distances itself from the 'geeky' aspects of the classic gamer. Gamma Labs approaches influencers with significant followerships across their social media platforms to promote G Fuel. These influencers comprise 'Team Gamma', which has 60 members: twenty-two Twitch streamers; thirteen esports organisations, representatives, or players; and seven YouTube celebrities or vloggers.

Although G Fuel has connections with many microcelebrities, its Facebook page features less influencer content than their other social media accounts. The page is mostly used for advertising new flavours and influencer collaborations and address customer issues. While G Fuel's website mostly takes on the professional register of performativity, their Facebook account takes on the personal element, "the performance of rebellion against established norms and systems" (Marshall, Moore & Barbour 2020, p.65). Some posts reference meme culture, such as one that features an image of FaZe Clan member, Choosymk, surrounded by G Fuel products, accompanied by "When that #GFUEL shipment finally comes in…STONKS 📈💸💦" (G Fuel 2020a). When engaging with customers, G Fuel's persona is somewhat playful and does not adopt a customer service attitude: instead, it directly calls out unreasonable complaints. For instance, in response to a customer's complaint that a sale began just after they had made an order, a G Fuel spokesperson responded with "sales can't be adjusted to accommodate for your personal schedule for your own convenience – that's not how life works lol…" (G Fuel 2020b). Such a statement illustrates the performance of rebellion, not being a typical company, but one that adopts the sarcastic attitude of an internet commenter. In this sense, the G Fuel Facebook page performs a rebellious and confident gamer persona – traits that they also seek in the personas of influencers they collaborate with.

Gamma Labs' commitment to partnership and collaboration in promoting G Fuel is most apparent on video platforms such as Twitch, Twitter, and YouTube, where influencers with substantial audiences are more likely to seek out and be receptive to brands as sponsors. G Fuel's use of such platforms illustrates their brand persona's mediated nature, as the content is created and shared across all accounts. Most of the videos on their YouTube account are short

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

advertisements for new flavours, merchandise, and influencer collaborations. There are also longer videos featuring autograph and behind-the-scenes content from esports tournaments, collated in their "EXPERIENCE eSports" playlist. The G Fuel Twitter accounts, @GFuelEnergy and @GFUELesports, also feature gaming and esports-heavy content, the former featuring similar content to the Facebook account as well as competitions to win merchandise, advertisements for esport tournaments, and the like. The latter mostly consists of the same esports content, but also gifs, videos, and links to influencers who have partnerships with the brand. The presence of influencer content provides a personal element to G Fuel's advertisements. It provides a sense of intimacy, a "performance of emotional sensitivity and intensity" (Marshall, Moore & Barbour 2020, p.65). In the following section, we discuss how microcelebrities in the online gaming sphere perform the 'contemporary' gamer persona in their promotion of G Fuel.

Prestige and Controversy

G Fuel's collaborations with influencers establish a two-way relationship where prestige is shared amongst both parties. In the context of persona studies, prestige refers to "the capacity for an individual to gain widespread respect and admiration through the development and use of a persona" (Marshall, Moore & Barbour 2020, p.78). Prestige is developed through agency, value, and reputation: that is, the gamer persona is strategically performed in a space where gaming skills, knowledge, and product consumption establishes and reaffirms one's reputation as a gamer. As well as the scale and number of friends and followers one has, prestige can be impacted by interpersonal connections, such as liking, sharing, and favouriting by other users. Such actions "demonstrate the respect and admiration other users have for the content and substance of a persona" (2020, p.78). The partnership relationship between G Fuel and an influencer, then, in the creation and maintenance of the persona, is a dialectical. G Fuel as a brand accumulates fame and recognition from its association with exceptionally famous gaming influencers. In turn, influencers extend their collective network reach and may receive attention from the G Fuel consumer base. Here we examine three of G Fuel's major 'partnerships'[3]— FaZe Clan, PewDiePie, and Keemstar—and consider the extent to which they provide prestige to the brand through the performance and expression of the contemporary 'gamer' persona.

FaZe Clan

FaZe Clan is an esports organisation that boasts some of the most competitive gaming teams globally and has a long-term partnership arrangement with Gamma Labs. FaZe team members arguably present the most desirable persona sought by G Fuel – the 'contemporary' gamer. This gamer identity values the cognitive skills required to play competitively; is interested in athleticism and dedicated to appearance, such as having a robust PC setup, RGB lighting, and gaming chairs; is interested in broader Internet and popular culture; and desires to play games *for a living,* feeding into neoliberal ideologies concerning individual employment. Still, this persona maintains elements of the classic gamer in the sense that those who are male *and* highly dedicated to the hobby more easily gain legitimacy compared to women and minorities, as well as those who have a more relaxed attitude to gaming, play less often, or play so-called "casual" games. Of course many women are highly dedicated and many men play more 'casually', but the perceived correlation between maleness and dedications remains common. The contemporary gamer persona is more of a cool, competitive, prankster who happens to enjoy gaming and related products, as opposed to an awkward, enthusiastic hobbyist. FaZe Clan is able to perform this contemporary gamer persona – they express the qualities valued by their collective and individual micro-publics, the agency to skilfully construct this persona, and the reputation to legitimise it. Further, some members of FaZe Clan live together. Referred to as

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

'content houses', this is a recent phenomenon where microcelebrities of similar content genres live and collaborate with one another to increase their content output, to access and connect with external micro-publics and networks, and to reinforce their persona's prestige through group membership. FaZe Clan has utilised this strategy to construct their gamer personas, accumulating and maintaining prestige through FaZe membership, house presence, and collaborations.

As of 2020 FaZe Clan has seven official flavours with G Fuel. In contrast to other major G Fuel influencers, FaZe Clan produces significant amounts of promotional material, with notable members hosting G Fuel videos on their respective YouTube channels, many of which have millions of followers. G Fuel's YouTube channel also contains numerous videos featuring FaZe Clan, including interviews with members and teams, and behind-the-scenes footage from competitive tournaments. G Fuel often tweet about FaZe Clan's participation in tournaments, special events such as recruitment challenges, and their G Fuel flavours and merchandise, many of which are accompanied by the catchphrase "Faze up!". In their partnership with FaZe, G Fuel capitalises on the organisation's prestige in competitive gaming, and their consequent need to perform well. For example, their video *Fuel Your Life – FaZe Censor* sees former FaZe Clan member Censor at a park, creating a G Fuel drink, consuming it, and then cuts to fast-paced clips of him working out at the gym, gaming, playing basketball, studying, swimming, and very briefly, relaxing. The advertisement ends with Censor walking out of the frame, the words "Fuel Your *Life*" appearing on-screen (G Fuel 2015). This advertisement presents the value associated with FaZe Clan as aspirational figures (strong, motivated gaming athletes), fitting neatly into their reputation for success. Consequently, G Fuel and FaZe Clan have accrued significant amounts of prestige through their eight-year partnership. In sponsoring FaZe Clan, Gamma Labs achieves the persona that it wishes to graft to the G Fuel brand – competitive, high-performing, dedicated, and stylish gamers that distance themselves from geekery.

PewDiePie

Another key collaboration is between G Fuel and PewDiePie (Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg). PewDiePie is one of the most recognisable figures in online gaming culture, having the second-most subscribed to channel on YouTube, and a significant amount of value, agency, and reputation within his micro-public that has helped him to maintain prestige. The partnership between PewDiePie and G Fuel mostly features on YouTube, where G Fuel promotes its collaboration through numerous quirky promotional videos that reference PewDiePie's content. Since these videos are on G Fuel's channel instead of his own, PewDiePie is promoted to G Fuel's micro-public on YouTube and their other social media channels. Such sharing of micro-publics is further bolstered by PewDiePie's interaction with this channel. For instance, on the *G FUEL PEWDIEPIE | Ready-To-Drink Can!* comment section, he writes: "I can finally share my latest addiction, we made a drink thats [sic] too good! im [sic] scared help" (Kjellberg 2020). This comment currently has 14K likes, demonstrating PewDiePie's prestige as a microcelebrity, and approval from G Fuel's micro-public concerning their collaboration.

Although PewDiePie's video content is not based on competitive play, in partnering with G Fuel he is able to associate with the clout of competitive gaming to maintain his gamer persona within his micro-publics. For example, in his announcement that he had signed G Fuel as a sponsor, presented mid-way through one of his meme-focused 'Reddit Review' videos, he states:

> I don't know about you guys but I used to drink energy drinks, and I tested out G Fuel, and like genuinely, I was sceptic to it, but I find it to be a healthier solution to just drink a G Fuel instead. It also doesn't make me — I mean I don't

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

> know if this is true or not — but generally my experience, when you drink- when I drink an energy drink I get hyped for like ten minutes and then it goes away, but with G Fuel, I generally don't feel that, I just feel like I get more energy and it boosts me throughout the day. Wow, epic! (Kjellberg 2019)

PewDiePie's comments paint G Fuel as a way of providing energy throughout his day, as opposed to improving his skills during gaming. He also focuses on its taste, describing his favourite flavours. While a focus on taste is common among sponsored influencers, PewDiePie's emphasis on product quality, trust, and (somewhat vaguely) 'healthiness' differs to that of competitive gamers such as members of FaZe Clan. It is also interesting to note that PewDiePie repeatedly mentions "sceptic/al" throughout his announcement, indicating that he is wary of alienating the part of his micro-public that may be concerned about energy drinks' impact on health. PewDiePie is afforded the opportunity to gain further prestige through connection to G Fuel's micro-publics and networks, and therefore, he is still aware of his reputation within his audience and the need to maintain his gamer persona and the values associated with it. Overall, PewDiePie performs a more relaxed, Internet-culture orientated, and quirky persona in contrast to FaZe's cool and competitive persona, but still conforms to most elements of the contemporary gamer persona (such as gaming frequently). In scoring a partnership with PewDiePie, G Fuel as a brand increases its value and reputation among the wider gaming community who are not competitive players, and presents itself as a quality product consumed by microcelebrities, a product that is *potentially* necessary to their success. This establishes and reinforces their prestige with micro-publics.

Keemstar

Prestige, however, goes both ways – a company can suffer when a connected influencer becomes embroiled in controversy and vice versa. An example of this is the breakdown of G Fuel's collaboration with YouTuber Keemstar (Daniel Keem). Keemstar is known for making inflammatory videos about internet celebrities on his *DramaAlert* channel, as well as his gaming content that includes coverage of online tournaments that feature popular microcelebrities. Keemstar maintains a contemporary gamer persona that is expanded by a negative reputation for emphasising aggressive social interaction and spreading gossip. His persona, despite the controversy, or perhaps because of it, has experienced exceptional success and associated prestige. In May 2020, another YouTuber, h3h3Productions (Ethan Klein) published a video connecting Keemstar to the suicide of gaming YouTuber, Etika (Desmond Amofah) (Klein 2020a; Tenbarge 2020). In the video, h3h3Productions discusses G Fuel's ongoing collaboration with Keemstar despite his numerous transgressions which include falsely accusing a streamer of being a paedophile: "G Fuel, brought to you by false paedophilia accusations! Chug a G Fuel! Get it now at gfuel.com…" (Klein 2020a). Following this, G Fuel was heavily criticised for collaborating with Keemstar. One upset customer posted on G Fuel's Facebook page: "Hey gfuel, how can you sponsor someone who has had a known video of themselves saying the n word over and over.... that video has been around for a while now, yet you still sponsored him" (G Fuel 2020c). This audience outcry resulted in Keemstar terminating his contract with G Fuel (he claims)[4] (Tenbarge 2020). Subsequently h3h3Productions stated on Twitter:

> Keemstar wears g in every video & has gfuel on his desk in every video, its [sic] as much a part of him as his beard, its [sic] part of his identity. I didnt [sic] go after any of his other sponsors but this one is part of who he is. If gfuel dropped keemstar it's keemstars fault. (Klein 2020b)

h3h3Production's observation can be supported. G Fuel and Keemstar actively engaged in each other's networks and micro-publics, with Keemstar maximizing his "meta-collective complex"

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020. Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

(Moore, Barbour & Lee 2017, p.6). It is also important to note that G Fuel was aware of Keemstar's polarising reputation, once promoting Keemstar merchandise with a tweet: "Introducing…The 'KEEMSTAR KARNIVAL' Shaker! Time to take your mouth on a roller coaster of internet drama!" (G Fuel 2019). Thus, it appears that Gamma Labs forgives certain transgressions, or at least that Keemstar's persona conformed to G Fuel's expectations. However, following the release of h3h3Production's video, Keemstar's reputation had been damaged to the extent that even networks and publics beyond his had begun to feel the impact, and therefore experienced a significant decrease in prestige. If Gamma Labs had remained associated with Keemstar, they could have risked their other influencer's reputations, impacting the strength of the networks and publics that had been created around this shared gamer persona. However, G Fuel did not release a statement on the termination of Keemstar's partnership, only removing his products and merchandise from their store. Content that includes Keemstar remains on G Fuel's YouTube channel, signalling that G Fuel still benefits from Keemstar's collaboration. Similarly, while Keemstar has experienced significant controversy throughout his career, these controversies have seemingly not had a negative *long-term* impact on his prestige. It is possible that if h3h3Productions had not criticised G Fuel directly in his video, the short-term nature of Internet outrage and prestige loss, as well as Keemstar's seeming ability to avoid the major consequences of 'cancel culture', would have seen Keemstar remain in Team Gamma.

Although it is unknown whether G Fuel intended to end their partnership with Keemstar, the termination was the result of lost prestige. In comparison to Keemstar, it seems that PewDiePie's relentless popularity, particularly amongst young men, outweighs his personal controversies. PewDiePie has engaged in anti-Semitism, relying on a kind of anti-political correctness 'trolling' attitude to defend himself as 'just joking' (Hokka 2020). It appears that his level of prestige is high enough to mitigate any potential damage G Fuel's reputation might experience by partnering with him. Additionally, FaZe Clan has experienced a number of controversies, both collectively (restrictive contracts, gambling) and individually (game bans, drug abuse, sexism). A possible explanation for why PewDiePie and FaZe Clan are able to get away with controversy is their respective levels of prestige. While the DramaAlert YouTube channel has 5.6 million subscribers, PewDiePie's channel currently sits at over 100 million. The FaZe Clan YouTube channel currently has 8.3 million subscribers, but this number becomes far more significant when the YouTube channels of popular members of the group are included (Rug, for example, currently has 16.6 million). Another explanation for why PewDiePie and FaZe Clan can mitigate reputational damage to G Fuel comes from the specifics of the controversies. PewDiePie has made numerous racist, antisemitic, and sexist comments, and has a few somewhat tenuous connections to alt-right figures (Roose 2019). However, it seems his actions have yet to be received (by his own micropublics, as well as the Internet's greater sphere) as inflicting overt and explicit harm upon others to the extent of drama content creators such as Keemstar - or at least, PewDiePie's controversies and 'cancellations' have not significantly impacted his prestige as a creator, as he continuously enters into new partnerships. FaZe Clan's long-term relationship with G Fuel and their status as an institution allow them to distance individual members' behaviour from the greater team. These influencers share similar values associated with the contemporary gamer persona, and have moved on from gaming-only content. However, PewDiePie and FaZe Clan still closely perform the gamer persona desired by Gamma Labs for the branding of G Fuel and its associated persona.

In high-profile partnerships such as those Gamma Labs has with FaZe Clan, PewDiePie and (formerly) Keemstar, it is evident that it is not only G Fuel as a product that receives increased prestige in a competitive market. Influencers are able to maintain their accumulated prestige by performing a form of a contemporary gamer persona – one that is specifically

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

gendered male, dedicated to creating (at least initially) gaming-related content distanced from traditional depictions of geekery, and has the potential to be involved in controversial situations. Further, in viewing the higher echelons of G Fuel's squad, which include the hyper-popular YouTuber KSI and live streamer Dr Disrespect, it becomes apparent that it is strategically better for Gamma Labs to take on risk and engage in relationships with controversial figures if they have high prestige. As this gamer persona currently dominates on popular online platforms and their communities, Gamma Labs is able to take risks with these creators, as they are routinely legitimised by their massive, gaming-enthusiast audiences – audiences that Gamma Labs eagerly wishes to bring into their micro-publics.

DIVERSITY

A final important aspect of G Fuel's gamer persona is its negotiation and representation of gender. Gamma Labs presents itself as being aware of women's underrepresentation and poor treatment in multiplayer spaces, esports, game development and publishing, journalism, and content creation. G Fuel's website contains a blog section that regularly publishes a "*Women of G Fuel"* series, consisting of interviews with female content creators. These interviews offer insightful details into the history and lives of women streamers, specifically how and when they started gaming, and what obstacles linked to their gender they have faced in their journey. For example, in their interview with variety Twitch streamer Cahlaflour, the interviewer notes "Cahla has also learned to brush off haters who question her legitimacy as a gamer due to her gender—a disappointingly common occurrence for the horror-game streamer" (Lee 2019). Similarly, in their interview with fighting game streamer ARUUU (Alanya Hikaru Alisha), the interviewer states that "[t]hough she had played *Tekken* for years before EVO 2018 [a fighting game tournament], some haters openly questioned how genuine her interest in fighting games was" (Lee 2020). In these examples, Gamma Labs is eager to highlight the issues women face in competitive and community gaming spaces.

It is clear that Gamma Labs is attempting to diversify the types of creators it collaborates with and frame itself as a brand that champions diversity. However, it is difficult for women to become cultural intermediaries for gaming culture. The power dynamics and cultural norms created and maintained within and alongside the game industry radically deplete the value, agency, and reputation that women have in establishing persona in these spaces. Consequently, there are few female creators in the online gaming space that have managed to attain similar levels of prestige as the likes of PewDiePie, and so 1) there are fewer female influencers to choose from to promote G Fuel and to help it establish its persona, and 2) these influencers have less prestige to offer (although it does indicate some recognition of female players). Consequently, only ten of G Fuel's sixty sponsors are women, and only one currently inhabits the role of major brand ambassador at G Fuel – variety streamer NoisyButters.

NoisyButters

In July 2020, G Fuel announced that NoisyButters (Hannah Bryan) would be releasing her own official G Fuel flavour, 'Star Fruit', and a branded shaker. This was the first time a female sponsor had received an official flavour, and the accompanying press release legitimised her higher-level partnership by noting the number of her social media followers and views on YouTube – her prestige. What makes NoisyButters particularly interesting is that, in comparison to PewDiePie, Keemstar and other male influencers partnered with Gamma Labs, her persona is in direct contrast to their 'troll-like' or otherwise controversial personas. Gamma Labs' press release on NoisyButters' flavour states that "[w]hether she's gaming, streaming, building PCs, giving her fans a tour of her gaming setup, or spending time with her family, Hannah lives by

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

and promotes *positivity and happiness*, an integral part of her personal brand" (PR Newswire 2020, emphasis added). By establishing a partnership with NoisyButters, G Fuel's persona can take on some of her positive brand traits.

Further, NoisyButters appears to present a representation of a female gamer persona that is publicly unaffected by attention to her gender. For example, in a video posted to her YouTube channel, *"GIRL GAMER" Stereotype | SoaR Butters*, she shares a situation where she was categorised as a 'girl gamer' (in this context a girl who is not interested in video games, but performs a gamer persona in order to accrue male attention):

> But just to clarify, this whole 'girl gamer' stereotype doesn't really bother me at all, I've been told that I'm a girl gamer ever since I was like, what, fourteen, so it literally just goes right over my head 'cuz I don't give a damn. I will say having it happen to me in person was really…interesting? I had never really been defined by my gender that much in the gaming realm in person but hey, you know, whatever, I thought it was hilarious… (Bryan 2018)

Yet NoisyButters also commented on the discrimination she has experienced as a woman in an interview with tech brand Republic of Gamers: "Bryan never let the discrimination bring her down because she knew she was skilled at the game, and she stood strong in the belief that everyone should be there for the same reason—to have fun" (Republic of Gamers 2019). NoisyButters has not experienced the types of mass controversy that other popular women content creators such as Pokimane (Imane Anys) and Kaceytron (Kacey Kaviness) have experienced due to their gender. Further, NoisyButters has an interest in competitive gaming – she is a member of esports team Atlanta FaZe – but her persona is organised around content creation as a player and not an esports competitor. By avoiding stigma and controversy, NoisyButters creates value for her persona through playing mainstream titles such as *Call of Duty* with great attention to game mechanics, and establishing a strong reputation through her consistent affirmance of personal values such as "positivity" and "happiness".

NoisyButters performs a gamer persona that exudes positivity and enjoyment, with her content almost exclusively focused on *playing* games. As a member of Team Gamma, her persona appears to exist as a tempering force alongside the sometimes-controversial gamer personas performed by Keemstar, PewDiePie, and the FaZe Clan, rather than directly challenging them. In comparison to these other figures, her persona aligns more closely and exclusively with the *dedication to games* aspect that the contemporary gamer persona preserves from its classic iteration, rather than courting controversy. Gender plays a complex role here. Though NoisyButters has shared her experiences with discrimination as a woman in games, she does not configure gender as part of her persona, or at least, she *attempts* to avoid doing so. At the same time, her focus on positivity is a sound approach for a female content creator, who would be hard-pressed to perform a similar persona to, for example, PewDiePie, without backlash when appealing to broader gaming audiences.

The gamer identity is in flux, and this has afforded creators such as NoisyButters a greater ability to successfully construct, maintain, and perform a gamer persona, despite gender discourses that constrict what performances of persona are seen as legitimate by gamer audiences. However, in having to constantly manage the structural and cultural conditions that seek to oppose them, it is unsurprising that female gaming microcelebrities are disadvantaged compared to male creators, who are able to manage their personas to further their careers without strong pushback. Female content creators can exercise decision-making and hold agency over their gaming personas, which are highly defined by their expression of femininity (whether intentionally expressed or not). As a result, while they can perform aspects of the

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

contemporary gamer persona, this persona is still highly associated with, and legitimised publicly by male figures. The few major partnerships Gamma Labs has with female gaming microcelebrities, for example, strongly suggests that famous women are not afforded the same opportunities to grow their careers as men with similar personas and followerships online. Until this occurs, it is likely that the perception of the gaming persona, as supported by G Fuel, is likely to be perceived as inherently masculine. As a significant gaming product, G Fuel has the ability to make meaningful change in the wider gaming industry by signing female influencers with high levels of prestige.

Conclusion

This paper provides a snapshot of some of the ways that G Fuel constructs and performs a contemporary gamer persona, which has a reciprocal relationship with their chosen sponsees, and, in turn, is impacted by the sponsees' audiences. On its website Gamma Labs does not solely focus on gaming, instead emphasising an exciting, busy life for anyone consuming G Fuel, which is offered as a healthy alternative to other energy drinks. It is in G Fuel's social media pages where a collective and mediatised gamer persona is evident, fuelled by engagement with a variety of gaming influencers. Our investigation brought forward two themes relating to these influencers: the balancing of prestige and risk, and the inclusion of diverse influencers. The gamer identity, while in a sense being 'dead', is undergoing a resurgence. Gamers, in the context of G Fuel, are no longer conceptualised as antisocial and lazy, but cool, energetic, and constantly engaging with media such as esports and popular culture. They are still, however, seen as predominantly young men dedicated to gaming. Consequently, female streamers and esports players remain much less prominent in terms of microcelebrity and prestige.

Overall, the G Fuel persona illustrates that while there have been significant cultural shifts, trends, and patterns in the gaming industry, there is still space for improvement when it comes not only to increasing diversity, but also in deciding *who* receives attention, and therefore, can foster prestige and benefit financially. Keemstar, PewDiePie, and FaZe Clan are considered some of the key faces of contemporary gaming, and their inflammatory content as well as promotion of G Fuel is popular amongst younger viewers. Considering the sometimes-controversial nature of their content and the health concerns regarding energy drinks, brands, microcelebrities, and platforms must consider the impact that such content (and the way it is presented) has on consumers and, more broadly, the impact it has on the gaming sphere. Future research into product marketing towards gamers, as well as gamer personas, would further benefit our understanding of how popularity, prestige, and influence are formed and utilised by individuals within the online gaming space.

End Notes

1. In 2014 Eron Gjoni accused his game developer ex-partner Zoë Quinn of having affairs with numerous games journalists in order to obtain positive reviews of their game *Depression Quest*. After posting these accusations on a blog and numerous forums, Quinn became a target of intense vitriolic bullying. This developed into a chaotic harassment campaign targeting mostly women in gaming.
2. Crowdfunding platforms such as Kickstarter and Patreon, as well as social media, have enabled developers to become more visible to their audiences. Further, many tools such as Unity and Blender are free or offer scaled pricing, enabling individuals and small studios to engage in game development with lower barriers to entry.

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

3. G Fuel's advertising material refers to such arrangements as 'partnerships', however, it's worth noting that G Fuel appears to 'sponsor' content creators also. Throughout this paper we have chosen the term 'partnership' to describe the relationship G Fuel has with gamer influencers, although each arrangement may have its own particular conditions.

4. Following criticism sparked by hshsProduction's video, Keemstar stated that he "walked away" from his contract with G Fuel due to the criticism G Fuel was receiving for sponsoring him (Tenbarge 2020). To our knowledge, G Fuel has not publicly commented on the situation.

Works Cited

Abidin, C 2015, 'Communicative ♡ Intimacies: Influencers and Perceived Interconnectedness', *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*, vol. 11, no. 8, retrieved 10 September 2020, <https://adanewmedia.org/2015/11/issue8-abidin/>.

Alexander, L 2014, '"Gamers" don't have to be your audience. "Gamers" are over.', *Gamasutra*, 28 August, retrieved 9 May 2017, <http://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/224400/Gamers_dont_have_to_be_your_audience_Gamers_are_over.php>.

Borowiecki, KJ & Bakhshi, H 2017, *Did you really take a hit? Understanding how video games playing affects individuals*, NESTA London, retrieved 24 January 2018, < https://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/did_you_really_take_a_hit_understanding_how_video_games_playing_affects_individuals.pdf>.

Brand, JE, Jervis, J, Huggins, PM and Wilson, TW 2020, *Digital Australia 2020*, Interactive Games & Entertainment Association, retrieved 23 January 2020, < https://igea.net/2019/07/digital-australia-2020-da20/>.

Bryan, H 2018, '"GIRL GAMER" Stereotype | SoaR Butters', NoisyButters, *YouTube*, 10 April, retrieved 22 August 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpS2MPUyETo>.

Consalvo, M 2007, 'Creating the market: Easter eggs and secret agents', in *Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames*, MIT Press, United States, pp. 17–40.

Darvin, L, Vooris, R & Mahoney, T 2020, 'The playing experiences of esport participants: An analysis of treatment discrimination and hostility in esport environments', *Journal of Athlete Development and Experience*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 36–50.

De Grove, F, Courtois, C & Van Looy, J 2015, 'How to be a gamer! Exploring personal and social indicators of gamer identity', *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 346–361.

Dewinter, J & Kocurek, CA 2017, '"Aw fuck, I got a bitch on my team!": Women and the exclusionary cultures of the computer game complex', in J Malkowski & TM Russworm (eds), *Gaming representation: Race, gender, and sexuality in video games*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 57–73.

Dymek, M 2012, 'Video Games: A Subcultural Industry', in P Zackariasson & TL Wilson (eds), *The video game industry: formation, present state, and future*, Routledge, New York, pp. 34–56.

ESA 2020, *Essential Facts about the Computer and Video Game Industry*, Entertainment Software Association, retrieved 22 September 2020, < https://www.theesa.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Final-Edited-2020-ESA_Essential_facts.pdf>.

Fairchild, C 2019, 'Let Us Now Praise Famous Guitars: Persona and the Material Displays of Popular Music Museums', *Persona Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 61–74.

G Fuel 2015, 'Fuel Your Life - FaZe Censor', G FUEL, *YouTube*, 3 December, retrieved 25 August 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4750gqsyww>

—2017a, 'What is G Fuel?', G FUEL, *YouTube*, 12 December, retrieved 17 April 2020, <https://youtu.be/krHsf8pSilM>.

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020. Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

—2017b, 'What is G FUEL Energy?', G FUEL, *YouTube*, 5 May, retrieved 17 April 2020, <https://youtu.be/qpjjaN7gVwY>.
—2019, 'THE @KEEMSTAR KARNIVAL...', G FUEL, *Twitter*, 29 November, retrieved 16 September 2020, <https://twitter.com/GFuelEnergy/status/1200148479022174209>.
—2020a, 'When that #GFUEL...', G FUEL, *Facebook*, 17 August, retrieved 16 September 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/GFuelEnergy/posts/3394689523886178>.
—2020b, '2014 to NOW...', G FUEL, *Facebook*, 21 May, retrieved 16 September 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/GFuelEnergy/posts/3146572135364586>.
—2020c, 'New twitter avi...', G FUEL, *Facebook*, 20 May, retrieved 16 September 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/GFuelEnergy/posts/3144331422255324>.
Gamma Labs 2020a, 'FAQ', *G Fuel*, retrieved 15 April 2020, <https://gfuel.com/pages/faq>.
—2020b, 'Our Story', *G Fuel*, retrieved 21 September 2020, < https://gfuel.com/pages/our-story>
Herskovitz, S & Crystal, M 2010, 'The essential brand persona: Storytelling and branding', *Journal of Business Strategy*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 21–28.
Hokka, J 2020, 'PewDiePie, racism and Youtube's neoliberalist interpretation of freedom of speech', *Convergence*, retrieved 10 September 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856520938602>.
Johnson, MR, Carrigan, M & Brock, T 2019, 'The imperative to be seen: the moral economy of celebrity video game streaming on Twitch.tv', *First Monday*, vol. 24, no. 8, retrieved 31 July 2020, <https://journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/8279/8058>.
Johnson, RS 2013, 'Toward Greater Production Diversity: Examining Social Boundaries at a Video Game Studio', *Games and Culture*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 136–160.
Kaser, R 2018, 'Study: Female streamers less likely to be paid than men', *The Next Web*, 3 June, retrieved 29 July 2020, <https://thenextweb.com/gaming/2018/06/01/study-female-streamers-less-likely-to-be-paid-than-men/>.
Kerr, A 2019, *Global games: Production, circulation and policy in the networked era*, Routledge, New York.
Khamis, S, Ang, L & Welling, R 2017, 'Self-branding, "micro-celebrity" and the rise of Social Media Influencers', *Celebrity Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 191–208.
King, B & Borland, J 2003, *Dungeons and Dreamers: The Rise of Computer Game Culture from Geek to Chic*, McGraw-Hill/Osborne, Emeryville.
Kjellberg, F 2019, 'Who is the REAL Pewdiepie?! /r/foundfelix/ #30 [REDDIT REVIEW]', PewDiePie, *YouTube*, 12 January, retrieved 15 August 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkPhhR_1hTg>.
—2020, 'I can finally…', *G FUEL PEWDIEPIE | Ready-To-Drink Can!*, PewDiePie, *YouTube,* 11 June, retrieved 15 August 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuWKGJ8aTBw>.
Klein, E 2020a, 'Content Nuke - Keemstar', h3h3Productions, *YouTube*, 19 May, retrieved 4 August 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3gXcIifc3o>.
—2020b, 'Keemstar wears gfuel...', h3h3productions, *Twitter*, 21 May, retrieved 4 August 2020, <https://twitter.com/h3h3productions/status/1263208275606073344>.
Lee, A 2019, 'Women of G FUEL: Cahlaflour', *G Fuel Blog*, 4 October, retrieved 19 August 2020, <https://blog.gfuel.com/women-of-g-fuel-cahlaflour>.
—2020, 'Women of G FUEL: ARUUU', *G Fuel Blog*, 30 January, retrieved 19 August 2020, <https://blog.gfuel.com/women-of-g-fuel-aruuu>.
Lopez Frias, FJ 2020, '"Fueling up" Gamers. The Ethics of Marketing Energy Drinks to Gamers', *Neuroethics*, retrieved 27 July 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12152-020-09442-8>.
Marshall, PD & Barbour, K 2015, 'Making Intellectual Room for Persona Studies: a New Consciousness and a Shifted Perspective', *Persona Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1–12.
Marshall, PD, Moore, C & Barbour, K 2020, *Persona Studies: An Introduction*, Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken.
Marwick, AE 2013, *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity and Branding in the Social Media Age*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

Moore, C, Barbour, K & Lee, K 2017, 'Five Dimensions of Online Persona', *Persona Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 1–11.
Newzoo 2014, *Sizing and Profiling eSports' Popularity*, retrieved 29 July 2020, <http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/700740/Newzoo_Free_Report_Sizing_Profiling_eSports_V1_8.pdf?t=1455182919568>.
Paaßen, B, Morgenroth, T & Stratemeyer, M 2017, 'What is a True Gamer? The Male Gamer Stereotype and the Marginalization of Women in Video Game Culture', *Sex Roles*, vol. 76, no. 7–8, pp. 421–435.
Pollack, CC, Kim, J, Emond, JA, Brand, J, Gilbert-diamond, D & Masterson, TD 2020, 'Prevalence and strategies of energy drink, soda, processed snack, candy and restaurant product marketing on the online streaming platform Twitch', *Public Health Nutrition*, pp. 1–11, retrieved 18 September 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980020002128>.
PR Newswire 2020, 'G FUEL And "Best in Gaming" NoisyButters Will Launch Star Fruit Flavor On July 15: G FUEL Star Fruit Is The Company's First Female-Inspired Flavor', *PR Newswire*, 21 July, retrieved 10 September 2020, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.uwa.edu.au/docview/2419144646?accountid=14681>.
Republic of Gamers 2019, 'The NoisyButters journey: past every obstacle, there's a positive outcome', *Republic of Gamers*, 7 November, retrieved 10 September 2020, < https://rog.asus.com/au/articles/gaming/the-noisybutters-journey-past-every-obstacle-theres-a-positive-outcome/>.
Ricchiuto, M 2018, 'There's a 718% Pay Gap Between the Top Male and Female Esports Champions', *Bleeding Cool*, 19 January, retrieved 19 September 2020, <https://bleedingcool.com/games/pay-gap-male-female-esports-champions/>.
Richards, G & Smith, AP 2016, 'A Review of Energy Drinks and Mental Health, with a Focus on Stress, Anxiety, and Depression', *Journal of Caffeine Research*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 49–63.
Roose, K 2019, 'What Does PewDiePie Really Believe?', *The New York Times*, 9 October, retrieved 11 February 2021, < https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/10/09/magazine/PewDiePie-interview.html>.
Ruberg, B, Cullen, ALL & Brewster, K 2019, 'Nothing but a "titty streamer": legitimacy, labor, and the debate over women's breasts in video game live streaming', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, vol. 36, no. 5, pp. 466–481.
Seifert, SM, Schaechter, JL, Hershorin, ER & Lipshultz, SE 2011, 'Health effects of energy drinks on children, adolescents, and young adults', *Pediatrics*, vol. 127, no. 3, pp. 511–528.
Senft, TM 2008, *Camgirls: Celebrity and Community in the Age of Social Networks*, Peter Lang, New York.
Shaw, A 2012, 'Do you identify as a gamer? Gender, race, sexuality, and gamer identity', *New Media & Society*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 28–44.
Stout, H 2015, 'Selling the Young on "Gaming Fuel"', *The New York Times*, 20 May, retrieved 15 April 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/20/business/energy-drink-industry-under-scrutiny-looks-to-gamers-to-keep-sales-surging.html>.
Taylor, T 2018, *Watch Me Play: Twitch and the Rise of Game Live Streaming*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
Tenbarge, K 2020, 'Energy drink company G Fuel no longer sponsors internet drama reporter Keemstar after claims that he exploited a YouTuber who died by suicide', *Business Insider*, 21 May, retrieved 22 May 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/g-fuel-ends-keemstar-sponsorship-h3h3-ethan-klein-etika-2020-5?r=US&IR=T>.
Twitch 2018, 'Audience', *Twitch*, retrieved 29 July 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20190407054850/https://twitchadvertising.tv/audience/>.
Usher, B 2020, 'Rethinking microcelebrity: key points in practice, performance and purpose', *Celebrity Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 171–188.
Zolides, A 2015, 'Lipstick Bullets: Labour & Gender in Professional Gamer Self-Branding', *Persona Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 42–53.

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

Zwibel, H, Difrancisco-Donoghue, J, Defeo, A & Yao, S 2019, 'An osteopathic physician's approach to the esports athlete', *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, vol. 119, no. 11, pp. 756–762.

Downloaded from search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.963473695979796. on 11/13/2025 04:35 AM AEST; UTC+10:00. © Persona Studies , 2020.
Available under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.